



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INFANT & TODDLER CONNECTION OF VIRGINIA CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN ROANOKE

Event to focus on “windows of opportunities” to positively impact development of young children.

Richmond, VA – On April 30 – May 1, 2008, the Sixth Annual Infant & Toddler Early Intervention Conference in Roanoke. The event will focus on maximizing opportunities to impact development during the essential period of growth and learning during the critical years in a child’s life from birth to age 3. Media is invited to attend the event:

Wednesday, April 30 – Thursday, May 1, 2008

Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, 110 Shenandoah Ave., Roanoke, VA

The conference, called “Viewing the Future Through the Windows of Opportunity” is part of an ongoing effort to inform early intervention providers, family members, physicians and the general public about the importance of early identification of developmental disabilities or delays.

“Nearly all of children’s neural connections are made in their very early years,” said James Reinhard, M.D., commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. “It is during this time when their development, learning and experiences are particularly important – we should capitalize on the windows of opportunity we have during these early years. The supports and services provided by early intervention helps children and their families reach their fullest potential.”

Featured speakers will include Dr. Pam Schiller, an early childhood curriculum specialist, author and speaker from Texas, and Karen Gaffney, president of a non-profit organization dedicated to full inclusion. Approximately 300 attendees are expected this year.

The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia is the commonwealth’s early intervention system for infants, toddlers and their families. The program helps identify and works with families and their children, from birth through age 2, who are showing signs of developmental delays or disabilities.

The conference is sponsored by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services in cooperation with The Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University, with funding in part by the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) in collaboration with the DOE Training and Technical Assistance Centers at George Mason University, James Madison University, Old Dominion University, VCU, and Virginia Tech.

Media planning to attend the event should contact Cori Hill at (540) 280-2889 or corihill@ntelos.net.

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Virginia’s public mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services system is comprised of 16 state facilities and 40 community services boards (CSBs) that serve children and adults who have or who are at risk of mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, mental retardation, or substance use disorders.